

## **Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety (VGB) Reauthorization Act**

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Drownings and near-drownings in pools and spas pose a significant public health risk to our nation's children. Drowning is a public health crisis, and it remains the leading cause of unintentional death for children ages one to four. Further, drowning death rates for American Indian and Black individuals demonstrate high disparities that greatly affect these communities and their families. However, we are not powerless in addressing these tragedies, and strong education, awareness, and enforcement efforts can help make children safer around the water and save lives.

The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety (VGB) Reauthorization Act, first authorized in 2008, is aimed at improving the safety of all pools and spas by increasing the layers of protection and promoting uninterrupted supervision to prevent child drowning and entrapment. The law has three principal elements:

1. **First**, it requires every public pool in the US to install safe drain covers that prevent suction entrapment.
2. **Second**, it initiates a grant program that incentivizes states and municipalities to have their own pool and spa safety laws and requirements on the books. These grants have provided critical support for local officials to educate communities about drowning and entrapment dangers.
3. **Third**, it launches "Pool Safely," a national public education campaign to raise awareness about drowning prevention.

The VGB Reauthorization Act will continue to carry out these primary functions in the tradition so well set as it builds on over a decade's worth of expertise in proper execution of the programs. The reauthorization extends grant program eligibility to non-profit organizations and Indian Tribes to expand the reach to even more communities and families and allows grant dollars to be used for swim lessons. It also creates a grant awareness campaign to increase participation across the country. Further, the bill increases relevant staffing at the CPSC, and incorporates provisions concerning oversight and reporting to continue to learn how to improve the programs in the future.

Keeping the VGB Grant Program and the "Pool Safely" campaign active and robust has had a strong and lasting impact on our communities. As such, it is necessary to amend and reauthorize this program to ensure it continues to benefit our communities as intended. With this reauthorization, we will ensure that the infrastructure, resources, commitment, and robustness of the program reflects the seriousness of this public health issue.